

GRADUATE ASSISTANT CHECKLIST

Appointment Considerations

1. Students may be appointed to the following positions:

Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA): Serves as a teacher of record, Assigns final grades, Paid from Faculty Salaries budget line, Specific course(s) taught must be specified on PTF, Receives a workload report with work units for class(es) taught

Graduate Assistant (GAS): Works in direct support of instruction, Paid from Faculty Salaries budget line, Receives a workload report showing 0 work units, Work units are assigned as a sub-administrative assignment, Cannot be paid from course fee or distance education accounts

Graduate Assistant (GAW): Assists with administrative duties, Paid from Wages budget line, All tutors are paid from wages, Must be used for course fee and distance education instructional support

Graduate Research Assistant (GRA): Involved in designated research, Must be used on 19 accounts, Paid from Wages budget line in the grant

2. Applications for assistantships can be located on the Graduate School (<https://www.twu.edu/gradschool/forms/>) website or in the department in which the applicant will study. Assistantship opportunities can also be found through Career Connections. (<https://twu.edu/careerconnections/>)
3. The completed application and supporting documents, such as letters of reference (if a department requires), must be filed with the head of the academic component for review and recommendation. Applications are kept on file in the department.
4. The department will verify the following qualifications for graduate assistants:
 - a. The student must be admitted to the Graduate School as a degree-seeking student.
 - b. The student must be in good academic standing at TWU. A student who is on scholastic probation may not hold a graduate assistantship.
 - c. A student who is employed full-time in any position cannot be appointed as a graduate teaching assistant.
5. Special criteria for **graduate teaching assistants** assigned primary responsibility for teaching a course for credit and assigning final grades to include the following:
 - a. The student must have completed at least 18 semester hours of graduate credit in the teaching field.
 - b. International students must present a TOEFL iBT Speaking score of 26 or higher, an IELTS Speaking Test score of 7.5 or higher, a Pearson Test of English (PTE)-Academic score of 53 or above, or a MELAB Speaking Test score of 4 or higher in order to hold a graduate teaching assistantship. The International Student and Scholar Services (<http://www.twu.edu/international-education/>) website lists English-speaking countries and exemptions.
 - c. The component unit head must complete the form, "Certification of Graduate Teaching Assistant Academic Preparation (<https://www.twu.edu/gradschool/forms/>)" and send it to the Graduate School at the time of appointment.
 - d. Each graduate teaching assistant must be assigned a mentor to guide her/him in the teaching role. The mentor is also responsible for assessing the GTA's teaching performance each semester.

Component unit heads should assure that each GTA is evaluated by the mentor.

6. Graduate Assistants **may not** be appointed concurrently as adjunct faculty.
7. Graduate Assistants **may not** be appointed concurrently as student assistants. In rare cases, the Dean of the Graduate School may approve an exception, when the request comes from the program unit head.
8. The minimum course load for which graduate assistants must be enrolled during long semesters is 6 semester hours. Departments may require a larger minimum number of hours. For enrollments less than 6 hours, a letter from the dean or program unit head to the Graduate School requesting approval to enroll for fewer hours and explaining the reason for the request is required. Students in the thesis, professional paper, or dissertation hours may register for a minimum of 3 hours. (Note: Students enrolled for less than 6 hours must pay FICA tax unless enrolled in the last semester.)
9. The course load for which graduate assistants working 0.50 FTE during the summer must be 6 semester credit hours of graduate coursework. The course enrollment for graduate assistants working less than 0.50 FTE during the summer is 3 semester credit hours of graduate coursework. The student can take either 3 or 6 hours at any time during the summer appointment.
10. The department will contact the student with an employment offer after checking qualifications. (If the graduate student is an F-1 visa student, contact must be made with International Student and Scholar Services (<http://www.twu.edu/international-education/>) so that the assistantship may be used to figure the student's financial support. Send a copy of the graduate assistantship award letter to International Student and Scholar Services (<http://www.twu.edu/international-education/>) so that it may be included with the student's I-20.)
11. The department will verify they have available funds for appointing a graduate assistant. **If funds are not available in the appropriate budget line, a budget transfer should be processed.**

Preparing and Processing PTFs

1. The department will prepare a personnel transaction form (PTF) using the electronic template accessed through Phoenix.
2. In order to assure a graduate assistant is paid, please follow the deadline dates published on the Payroll website in the office of Human Resources (<https://twu.edu/humanresources/>). In order to approve the PTF, the Graduate School must determine that the assistant is registered for the appropriate number of hours. Please encourage students to register early. **Approval for assistants not yet registered cannot be forwarded to Academic Financial Services and will be returned to the department.**
3. The pay scales (<https://www.twu.edu/gradschool/graduate-assistants/applying-for-graduate-assistantships/>) on the Graduate School website are to be used when completing the PTF. Note that the appointment salary on PTFs for Fall, Spring, and Academic year is always the 9-month salary, although the actual length of employment may be for a different period of time. On summer PTFs, the 3-month salary is the base.
4. The PTF must include a description of the graduate assistant's specific duties. If the assistant is a GTA, the specific courses taught must be listed.

5. The component unit head should send a memo to the Graduate School explaining the reasons for requesting approval if any of the following apply:
 - a. The student is enrolled for less than the required semester hours.
 - b. The student will be employed more than half-time.
 - c. The Student will be employed in a department other than her/his major.
 - d. The student is employed in another full-time university staff position. In this case, approval from the full-time supervisor should also be attached.
6. For a GTA, the "Certification of Graduate Teaching Assistant Academic Preparation (<https://www.twu.edu/gradschool/forms/>)" must be submitted to the Graduate School.
7. The component unit head and dean will approve the PTF and send it to the Graduate School for approval. The Graduate School will verify the following requirements:
 - a. Admission to a graduate program
 - b. Student registration for the required number of hours
 - c. Whether the student is international or a permanent resident
8. The Graduate School will approve the PTF and forward it to the Director of Academic Financial Services.

After Appointment

1. The department should send the graduate assistant to the Office of Human Resources (<https://twu.edu/humanresources/>) to complete the necessary forms to assure payment and insurance coverage, if applicable. ***The student must complete Human Resources paperwork prior to or within the first 3 days of employment by federal law.***
2. A out of state graduate assistant is entitled to register by paying the tuition and other fees or charges required for Texas residents without regard to the length of time the assistant has resided in Texas if: a) is enrolled in a minimum of 6 semester credit hours, b) the assistant is employed at least one-half time (.50 FTE), and c) is working in a position which relates to her/his degree program. The student should complete the Request for In-State Tuition Form (<https://www.twu.edu/gradschool/graduate-assistants/applying-for-graduate-assistantships/>) **for Graduate Assistants**, have it signed by the chair of the department and forward it to the Graduate School (<https://twu.edu/gradschool/>) as an e-mail attachment. The form must be submitted by the 12th class day of long semesters, the 4th class day of summer sessions, and the 2nd class day of the Summer 1 session. Graduate School personnel will approve the request for in-state tuition and forward the form to the Registrar's Office.
3. All Graduate Assistants (both new and returning) are required to complete Graduate Assistant Orientation/Training annually, usually just prior to or immediately after the start of the Fall semester. The Graduate School will send an email to departments/students with a link to the online Graduate Assistant Orientation/Training.
4. Each GTA must have a mentor who evaluates her/his teaching during the semester.